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SCHAKOWSKY HAILS HOUSE PASSAGE OF VAWA

INCLUDES PROVISION SIMILAR TO SCHAKOWSKY BILL TO FUND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR BATTERED WOMEN

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today hailed the passage of H.R. 1248, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by the House of Representatives. Included in the bill is a provision similar to Schakowsky's bill, H.R. 1352, to fund transitional housing for battered women and children.

VAWA is slated to expire on September 30th unless the House and Senate reauthorize the legislation. The Senate has yet to act on its version of the bill.

VAWA was enacted in 1994 and funds a number of grant programs to prosecute offenders and help victims of violence. The grants are used by states to assist law enforcement and prosecution, to encourage arrest policies, for rural domestic violence and child abuse enforcement, for training of victim advocates and counselors and for training programs for probation and parole officers who work with released sex offenders.

Below is Schakowsky's statement.

"I am pleased that the House has finally passed VAWA Reauthorization and I hope the other body will follow our lead and approve VAWA this week. I am also pleased that HR 1248 includes language from my bill, HR 1352, to fund transitional housing programs for women escaping abuse.

"In my home state of Illinois, VAWA has meant over \$40 million dollars for programs that protect hundreds of thousands of women, children and men who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. The clock is ticking--these critical programs expire in only a few days.

"In 1994, with the historic passage of the Violence Against Women Act, Congress sent a clear message to this nation that violence against women is not just wrong, it's a crime. Since then, VAWA '94 has created programs that have improved the lives of millions of women and children. These programs support the work of prosecutors, law enforcement officials, victim advocates, and health and social service professionals, who are responding to the problems of violence against women in communities throughout this country.

"However, there were gaps in VAWA '94. HR 1248 addresses these gaps by including expanded provisions that protect older women, women with disabilities and children,

providing needed civil legal assistance for victims and creating a domestic violence task force to ensure efficiency of federal efforts. But we can do more. It is my hope that when this bill goes to conference, the conferees will accept the Senate's language that provides desperately needed protections for battered immigrant women."